

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

**Group: 3**

**Program: Other Agency**

**Question No. AE15/019**

**Senator Milne asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2015:**

Senator MILNE: Can you indicate to me what the relationship is between the Federal Police's fraud and anticorruption team or unit and CrimTrac? How do they interact?

Mr Colvin: To be honest with you, not a great deal. CrimTrac is an agency that has no intelligence or investigative purpose. They are a data warehouse agency. They manage a lot the storage of central databases of law enforcement in this country. They are not an intelligence agency, and they are not an investigative agency. So the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Centre's interaction with CrimTrac, as part of the AFP, would be simply to access information that CrimTrac makes available to all law enforcement in this country.

Senator MILNE: You would be aware of the criticism in today's media with regard to CrimTrac and its following up. Anyway, you obviously do not have that relationship—

Mr Colvin: Senator, I have to be honest with you. I flew in from overseas at 12 o'clock today, so I am not aware of everything that was in the media but perhaps it was not CrimTrac. Was AUSTRAC the agency? That is more consistent with your line of questioning around money-laundering and flows of money. That would be AUSTRAC.

Senator MILNE: Okay. Well let me broaden it. I thought it was CrimTrac when I heard it on the radio this morning. Can you just indicate to me how the fraud and anticorruption team work across agencies to maximise effectiveness in terms of following up this, or do we have a whole lot of silos? That is what I am actually trying to establish here

Mr Colvin: It is a good question. No, we do not have a whole lot of silos. AUSTRAC are Australia's financial intelligence unit and they are the agency that runs the database that contains the flows of money into and out of this country. We work very closely with them on the analysis of those flows, the trends and the intelligence that may come from that which may be a pointer to further criminality—in which case, that would be a referral. So, again, AUSTRAC themselves do not investigate and take matters to prosecution. We work with AUSTRAC, as we do with the Australian Crime Commission, another important agency that has a key role in terms of understanding the illicit flows of money in Australia. The Fraud and Anti-corruption Centre would work very closely and does—as does all of the AFP—with the Australian Crime Commission.

I am not aware of the specific criticisms that have been raised on this, but I am happy to take it on notice and have a look at it. But certainly from my perspective, we reinforce at every juncture, as do all of my police colleagues around the country, that we do not operate in silos. This information is central to our investigation. To the extent that AUSTRAC, as our

financial intelligence unit, provides the analysis of money flows, that is the bread and butter for somewhere like the Fraud and Anti-corruption Centre to start their investigation. I think perhaps we have been given some more information.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

This is a matter for the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre.